

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife

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### INTERIOR ACCELERATES WETLANDS PRESERVATION

"Most successful year in a decade of wetlands preservation for waterfowl production."

That's how Secretary of the Interior Walter J. Hickel characterized the fiscal year 1970 efforts of his Department's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife.

When the "government year" ended last June 30, the Bureau had acquired 42,000 acres to bring the total of permanent waterfowl production areas under public ownership to more than 200,000 acres. Easements that protect seasonal or temporary wetlands from draining, filling, and burning were purchased for about 100,000 acres during the fiscal year, bringing this total to 770,000 acres, mostly in the two Dakotas and Minnesota.

Assistant Secretary Leslie L. Glasgow, who heads Interior's programs for fish, wildlife and parks, said that for the current year "we have accelerated our efforts to reach the 1976 goal of protecting 1,750,000 acres of prairie wetlands."

He emphasized that faster action is needed because continued loss of wetlands by draining and filling could make the high northern plains a "featureless expanse of grass and grain which would be tragic for those who want waterfowl and other wild creatures to remain a part of our environment."

This is the 12th year of the wetland acquisition program, concentrated in the "duck factory" region of the Dakotas, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Montana. Here each spring, melting snows fill thousands of glacier-born depressions--lakes, marshes, and potholes--where waterfowl return each year to feed, nest, and rear young.

The acquisition program has two parts. Fee purchases protect larger, more permanent wetlands by putting nucleus areas in public ownership. Under the second part of the program, seasonally temporary wetlands around nucleus areas remain in private ownership, but are protected by purchase of easements under which owners agree not to drain, fill, or burn their wetlands.

All such acquisitions are financed through the sale of Federal duck stamps and by an advance made by Congress on future stamp sales. Last year's sale of these stamps was more than 2 million, the highest since 1959, amounting to more than \$6 million.